VIETNAM

U.S. IMPERIALISM

and

US

STRIKE

This pamphlet, by Dan Gilbarg (a Harvard graduate student) with the help of many other people, was written and distributed during the Harvard strike of spring 1969.

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This pamphlet is part of our strike to abolish ROTC, end Harvard's expansion into Cambridge and Boston, and to set up a Black Studies Department in accord with the demands of Afro. It specifically deals with the relation of these demands (mainly ROTC) to the war in Vietnam and American imperialism. People involved in the campaign to abolish ROTC throughout the year have consistently argued that an effort to get rid of ROTC was justified in the light of larger issues. The special purpose of this pamphlet is to discuss these issues - the war, American foreign policy and the meaning of imperialism. It should be taken as complementary rather than inclusive of other literature on ROTC and our effort to get rid of it.

ABOLISH ROTC/END EXPANSION/BLACK STUDIES
NO PUNISHMENT

Most of us, by this time, oppose the war in Vietnam. There are many ways to oppose the war, and perhaps one of the main reasons why so many Americans do oppose it is that there seems to be no future in it -- we can't win the war, and its continuation will just mean more death, more taxes, more inflation, more draft, more disturbing and monotonous reports of the war on radio, in the press, on TV.

Last year's TET offensive was most instrumental in bringing people to such a position. The NLF demonstrated that it could strike anywhere and any time at will with the support of people in the countryside and in the urban areas where NLF support had historically been weakest. The significance of this event even managed to sneak through the prisms of government propaganda and press distortion, and millions of Americans came to understand better than ever before that our government was losing the war.

But many of us oppose the war not only because there is no future in it, but because we think it is wrong. We think that the U.S. government should respect the desire of the Vietnamese people to control their own country. Furthermore, many of us feel that a victory of the NLF in Vietnam would be not only popular but desirable. (See Part II.) That is, we feel that the real question is, who do you want to win in Vietnam?

As we see it, the war in Vietnam is a conflict between two competing social systems -- one, a popular socialist movement led by the National Liberation Front, the other a coalition of wealthy landlords and foreign investors nominally led by Thieu and Ky, but

actually led by the U.S. government. Compromise between the two systems is impossible because each one needs to eliminate the other in order to work. Either the Vietnamese peasants or the landlords and wealthy businessmen will win -- either the wealth of Vietnam will be used in the interests of all the people in Vietnam or for the profit of a few. This is not a hypothetical model. It was precisely the system of wealthy landlords and foreign corporations that reduced Vietnam to a poverty-stricken dependent colony and led to the Vietnamese revolution.

Only the advocates of immediate withdrawal or the advocates of a military conquest of Vietnam speak to this reality. Many "realists" who predicted that President Nixon, unsavory but highly practical, would quickly work out a "compromise" in Vietnam are now upset and perplexed by Nixon's recent statements that the U.S."will not tolerate" the recent Viet Cong attacks on U.S. positions. Since there has been no cease-fire worked out with the Viet Cong and since American planes have been bombing the south with increased frequency since the "bombing halt" of the North, it should hardly be a source of indignation that the Viet Cong are fighting back. Then why the provocative statements which Tom Wicker of the Times described as verging on "the old and disastrous policy of retaliation by which President Johnson found himself moving inexorably into escalation of the war four years ago." The answer isn't difficult to figure out. Nixon is now faced with the same dilemma that Johnson faced. Immediate withdrawal now means an NLF victory, and despite all evidence that it can not be averted, Nixon and the interests he represents are still leaving the door open for continued fighting in order to avoid that development. Making the Viet Cong offensive seem like a breach of faith is an attempt to prepare the American people for another

round of aerial bombings and high fatality U.S. troop operations that will accomplish little but postponing the inevitable.

The difficulty of coming to grips with the problem of who will govern Vietnam stems from a hostility to the socialist revolution being led by the NLF. Nixon's dilemma is perhaps best understood by the programs of Presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy, who certainly seemed to want a just peace in Vietnam more than Nixon. McCarthy's peace plank at the Democratic National Convention argued that before the United States could withdraw from Vietnam a new temporary government would be set up through negotiations,

> containing all major elements of the population, including substantial participation from the National Liberation Front. It will be the job of this government to prepare for national elections.

The evasiveness of McCarthy's position can be seen in the inconsistencies of the peace plank itself. In it, McCarthy argues that American withdrawal "amounts to permitting a military victory for the Viet Cong." The NLF, therefore, would hardly jump at a vague statement like "substantial participation" when they control most of the territory in Vietnam, and have such overwhelming support of the Vietnamese people that an American withdrawal would lead to the immediate collapse of the Saigon regime. Either the "substantial participation" of the NLF dominates the provisional government and with the withdrawal of American troops promised in the plank continues the building of a socialist society, or, "substantial participation" means that the Saigon government controls a coalition in which the NLF participates and the interests of large landlords and foreign investors are protected-- a

situation which the Vietnamese would accept only if they were defeated.

Nixon's dilemma is precisely the same. The U.S. is losing the war, and the future of U.S. domination in Vietnam seems dim. On the other hand, he fears leaving Vietnam. He understands, as did McCarthy and Lyndon Johnson, that withdrawal would mean a victory for the NLF because of its vast support within South Vietnam. And the consequences of permitting such a victory might be disastrous to the future of the American Empire. (See Part III.) What would reactionary oligarchs all over the world think about the American willingness to stand by them when challenged by landless and hungry people seeking to destroy them and to create a society that can serve themselves? What would oppressed peoples around the world do when it became evident that the Vietnamese people were able to kick the U.S. out of Vietnam? The idea of the Vietnamese revolution would spread throughout the world-- just as the idea of the Cuban revolution reached Latin American peasants and changed the ideas of Latin American revolutionaries who previously had thought that armed revolution was impossible. And finally, what would foreign investors-- in the 3rd World in general and especially in Southeast Asia -- think about the safety of their present and future investments? In other words, those who run America are not really worried about Communist expansion, in the sense of Vietnam invading Thailand, invading Pakistan, invading India until the chain reaches New York City. But they are worried about demoralization of native oligarchs, the elimination of profitable investment opportunities for themselves, and, most important, the possibility that the idea of the Vietnamese revolution would reach others of the 3rd World. They see Vietnam as a test case of their world hegemony.

Still, the Nixon administration isn't happy about continuing its fighting and bombing in Vietnam, and would prefer a settlement through negotiations that could give it substantial political control without such fighting and bombing. This is what the United States is trying to accomplish in Paris. Fortunately, however, it appears that the NLF will not buy such a settlement. In the time since the negotiations in Paris began late last year, the United States stepped up bombing of the South two-fold while carrying out tremendous numbers of search and destroy missions and an expanded pacification program. The NLF, meanwhile, did not initiate any offensive actions of its own. The U.S. hoped to maintain a show of strength for the negotiating table while expanding its military, if not political control. Expanded military control of significant land areas would lay the basis for a coalition government favorable to the U.S. (since he who controls the land wins the vote). But the NLF, after using this period to stimulate a demand for peace among moderate elements in the cities and to establish legitimacy for itself by forcing recognition by the Saigon regime in Paris, struck back decisively with its "spring offensive" which still continues. The purpose has been to punish U.S. units. Base camps, airfields, and artillery bases were attacked by relatively small guerilla units and rockets. Saigon troop concentrations were almost completely ignored, reflecting the NLF's evaluation that the Saigon army is ineffective and not their main enemy. U.S. troops have been pinned to their bases-- the NLF has inflicted heavy casualties and damage. It has made it clear the the U.S. is not even in a position to maintain a military, let alone a political, base in South Vietnam. Under such conditions, Paris affords little hope for the U.S.

Nixon has just faced his first major defeat in Vietnam. He just decide how to respond. Every time in the

past, American Presidents have decided to deal with weak political and military situations in Vietnam by trying another go of it. They have felt that the costs of leaving were too great, and perhaps they entertained hopes that new strategies, technologies, alliances, or negotiation frauds could change the balance of forces in Vietnam. How will Nixon decide this time?

One of the factors in his decision must necessarily be the political costs at home of making another go of it. The trouble is, opposition to the war at home is very weak right now. From the bombing of the North in February, 1965, until just some months ago, the strength of the movement against the war grew and grew. American Presidents, and those leaders of our society who fear challenges to their corporate empire, faced a growing alienation from government, growing militancy in attempts to resist the war, and a growing radical movement that challenged the entire structure of corporate capitalism, and which recognized that an attack on U.S. foreign policy had to be an attack on the system that produced that foreign policy. But then Johnson declined to run for office, the bombing of the North was stopped, negotiations in Paris were held, and McCarthy had his campaign. None of these events stopped the war, and none of them held out the possibility of a just or practicable settlement (U.S. withdrawal). But the anti-war movement, because of its weaknesses, fell apart nonetheless.

For some months now, a false sense has been created that the war either has ended or is about to end, that it is in good hands. Even many of those who would deride Nixon can't help but feel that way. Take for example what has happened on the campuses. To quote one New York Times report:

A state department official who recently returned from speaking engagements at a number of universities was amazed that students who only six months ago were lambasting Washington for its Vietnam policy hardly brought the subject up.

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But the war does continue. What can we do? Our role is to work to change the political equation for President Nixon and for those who run this country, and to build a movement that exerts even more power in the future. This is what we are trying to do at Harvard right now.

In the first place, we are attempting to raise the issue of the war through the fight around ROTC. We are trying to make it very clear, especially to students but also to working people in the community to the extent that we work to develop ties with them, that the war is not over, that Paris hasn't succeeded, couldn't succeed, and shouldn't succeed, that the U.S. government and those who benefit from our imperialist foreign policy are still trying to suppress by military, social, and every other kind of means and popular and just revolution. The fight around ROTC is one part of a fight to rekindle the anti-war movement in general, and on a deeper basis than before.

But, second, ROTC is more than a symbolic issue. It is also an important program in the effort of the American government to prosecute the military side of the war. Harvard's Colonel Pell, in his memorandum to the CEP, the Deans, and the Department Chairmen on December 4 (a memo discovered by opponents of ROTC and revealed in the Crimson and leaflets a month later), gives much of the necessary information and

ideas:

> About 45% of all Army officers currently on active duty are ROTC graduates; 65% of our first lieutenants and 85% of our second lieutenants come from the ROTC program.

The N.Y. Times (5 January, 1969) corroborates these figures. ROTC supplies 50% Army, 35% Navy, and 30% Air Force officers. Colonel Pell adds:

> Today, reliance upon colleges and universities for officers is greater than ever. For example, the 1968 graduating classes contained over 11,000 newly commissioned officers who, as they enter the ranks of the Active Army, will fill 85% of the required annual input needed to provide the junior leaders for today's troop units. More than 1,100 of these young men will become career officers to furnish the hard core leadership for the future. It is very evident that the present mission of ROTC is the production of officers, not merely to expose students to military training.

Some people say, doesn't such an attempt to kick the ROTC program off college campuses just leave the business of running the Army to less educated and sophisticated people? One should not assume that the Pentagon would find it so easy to plant new roots if deprived of access to students through their schools. It would take some time, and necessary changes (e.g., changing draft laws) would have political costs in themselves. But more than that, we should not assume it is better for our purposes if officers have more education. For one thing, the existing arrangements maintain a class structure within the Armed Forces. People with more education order around

people with less education, and the additional education forms one basis for maintaining authority. Moreover, college students, and especially Harvard students, who do have contact with "liberal" ideas can employ their ideological training in controlling in more sophisticated ways movements that threaten the powers-that-be. The military, with its growing emphasis on counter-insurgency and social and political techniques of control in addition to military repression, needs students educated at the college level, and especially at elite schools like Harvard. It is important for the ROTC program to have access to an educated group of young men because the military functions better when such young men comprise the officer corps. If our purpose is to impair the ability of the American military to put down revolutionary movements like that of the Vietnamese, then we should fight doubly hard to prevent the U.S. government to have access to Harvard students to carry out its military policies. Such reasoning is behind Colonel Pell's statement:

> Let it be understood beyond question that there is at present no acceptable alternative source of junior officer leadership if ROTC is driven from the college campus.

Others may accept the importance of ROTC as a whole to the Army, but wonder why Harvard's particular contribution is so important to attack. The answer is that our actions at Harvard have a tremendous impact on students who oppose the war at other universities.. The San Francisco State strike earlier this year had a phenomenal impact on campuses all over the country. Every building occupation and strike around racism that S.F. State stimulated in turn spread the idea to others. Black students all over the country

recognized that they could act to strike a blow against racism, and huge numbers of white students joined them. Certainly the efforts of black (and now white) students to fight for an Afro-American Studies program at Harvard are related to these struggles. Similarly, the struggles against ROTC. There are many campuses in the country in which campaigns against ROTC have begun; some are well advanced. Students on many more campuses would see that they too could fight the war and ROTC from examples elsewhere. Those in the Pentagon who run the ROTC program, and those Trustees and Corporation Fellows who run American universities and colleges know this. This is the basis of Colonel Pell's statement that:

> More important than any point thus far made is the role of Harvard University in setting a pattern of ROTC policy for the entire academic community. Harvard has a special obligation to the nation as a precedent-setting leader of the academic community. "As Harvard goes, so goes the Army ROTC program" might produce a disaster of real proportions if the ROTC concept is weakened and degraded nation-wide.

It would be a mistake to think, as perhaps this discussion has implied thus far, that the politics that we are getting involved in are simply a question of us versus the Nixon Administration, with perhaps the Pentagon and some ROTC bureaucrats like Colonel Pell thrown in. Those who evaluate the political costs of our efforts to get rid of ROTC and to raise the issue of the war include the entire corporate community with the power to determine the decisions that are made in this country and the interests to guarantee that these decisions will be made from a certain perspective.

The politically active managers, directors, and owners of the large corporations in this country may differ considerably on matters of interpretation - how much of a threat do we present to them, how dismal is the situation in Vietnam, how much the costs of leaving, what are the possibilities of forcing through a negotiated settlement favorable to them. They may also differ in their strategies of dealing with insurgency. What mixture of carrot and stick, how much encouragement of liberal organizations that can coopt radical challenges and so on. But these differences lie within the rather narrow limits of a perspective that seeks to maintain in the most effective manner as possible America's world hegemony (see Part III) and the structure of class domination (with them at the top) at home.

One Corporation in particular is worth considering more closely, for it is our most direct protagonist in the struggle at Harvard, and it has the most direct interest in controlling our efforts. This is none other than the Corporation that runs our fair University. The 7 men on this body hold a total of 1 chairmanship, 3 presidencies, and 33 directorships in major corporations. As such, they are part of that corporate community with so much power and shared interests. But it is they, in the last analysis, after consultation with others of their class whom they trust and respect, who make the decisions about ROTC at Harvard.

They are also the men who feel most closely some of the political costs of our actions. Many of us at Harvard are coming to recognize that Harvard is not an institution run by a set of disinterested educators, perhaps a bit bureaucratic and old-fashioned, but scholars all. Instead, we are coming to recognize the conflicts inherent in the interests of those who run Harvard University and those affected by it. We are

coming to understand the conflicts between the interests of the Harvard Corporation in furthering America's military efforts and the interests of the Vietnamese who are fighting to get the U.S. off their backs. We are coming to understand the conflict of interests between the Harvard Corporation and those who live in the Cambridge and Roxbury communities - Harvard as speculator and slumlord driving up rents vs. the people who must pay them or leave; Harvard as an agent of a transformation of Cambridge that make possible specialized research of all kinds for the American government, industry, and military vs. the working people of Cambridge who must leave because of such a transformation (see the pamphlet, Harvard, Urban Imperialist). And we are coming to understand the conflicts between the interests of Harvard Corporation and our own interests as students - Harvard which seeks to train people to have the skills, values, and ideas necessary to "succeed" in the professions, the bureaucracies, and for a few, the ruling classes, vs. students who need an education (e.g., Soc. Rel. 148/149; Black Studies) that can teach them what has to be changed and how to change it. (This suggests some of the reasons for linking the issues that have been raised the the Anti-ROTC/Anti-Expansion/Black Studies Strike.

The political hegemony that the Harvard Corporation has been able to maintain more or less to this time at Harvard is breaking down. A movement is growing, a movement that challenges the Harvard Corporation, and a movement that seeks to change this society, in which those who sit on the Corporation have so much at stake. Those who sit on the Harvard Corporation understand the ways in which this movement is a direct consequence of the war, and they have to reckon the costs of such a growing movement into their figurings about what the U.S. should do in Vietnam.

The costs of the war in Vietnam, and of U.S. imperialism in general, grow even larger when those who run our University consider the possibility of movement of working people in Cambridge to oppose Harvard's "urban imperialism", so much of which is for the purpose of creating facilities (like NASA and the Kennedy Institute) for research and policy formation for maintaining and extending the American Empire. At this point, hatred of Harvard is immense in the Cambridge working class communities, but much of this hostility is directed toward students. A number of the city councillors, for example, are quite friendly to Harvard in fact but make it a habit of blaming everything that happens in Cambridge on students (for example, we learn from them that the snow couldn't be plowed because of all the students' cars on the streets). One of the purposes of the struggles at Harvard is to show working people of Cambridge that students at Harvard in fact share the concern that the Harvard Corporation get off the backs of the people in Cambridge. Extensive leafletting has taken place in working class sections of Cambridge. Much more has to be done. But to the extent that an interpretation is made that provides an alternative to the press about the meaning of the events at Harvard, Harvard students and working people in Cambridge are brought closer together. This scares the Harvard Corporation, which rightly recognizes that their plans for Cambridge, and their desire to maintain their rule in the U.S. with other members of their class, depends on the quiescence of working people who in their large numbers, strategic power, and severe oppression at the hands of our society potentially constitute an effective agent of change.

What has the response of the Harvard Corporation been to the effort to get rid of ROTC at Harvard, when linked with the expansion (and recently) the Black Studies issues. For a long time, it was silence. Everyone thought the faculty had the power to make the relevant

decisions, and the Corporation was confident that the faculty would decide correctly. The Faculty did not decide to abolish ROTC, but it did respond sufficiently to student concern and pressure by passing a measure somewhat stronger than the Corporation was prepared for. Immediately, the Administration opened up negotiations with the Pentagon, hoping to work out a way by which ROTC could stay. Glimp, according to the Boston Globe (Feb. 6), called the Brig. Gen. C.P. Hannum, director of Army ROTC affairs, "to assure me that Harvard wanted ROTC and that the faculty recommendation was not a final word." According to the Crimson, Dean Ford covered his bets by noting that the Corporation has in the past failed to approve recommendations from the Faculty or has asked for revisions. For the first time somewhat threatened, the Corporation and the Administration that serves it made it absolutely clear who holds power in the University.

Similarly, the strategy of the Administration was to oppose the abolition of ROTC on grounds of the civil liberties of those who would join ROTC. But in fact, it was not especially interested in civil liberties. President Pusey was much more frank at SFAC when he said that the American military is our military. As Hugh Calkins, a Fellow of the Corporation in an interview on April 16,

> If the Faculty votes against ROTC, it is clearly a statement against the Vietnam war. We will not accept it regardless of the consequences. We will not accept the pressure of anyone to get rid of ROTC because we think it's a good thing... We would never delegate our authority to decide on ROTC to any other group. We would never, in effect, say that any issue was "too hot" for us

to handle. We would, however, take into consideration the opinions of the various faculties, 11 of them, in making our decision.

None of this should surprise us; but many of us were surprised , because the Corporation had before this had managed to hide its power and its interests very nicely.

At Columbia, last spring, the University Administration waited a week before calling the police. By that time, the numbers inside the buildings had grown and considerable support had grown up outside. Out of that came the theory of the 5:00 in the morning bust; by acting quickly, the lid could be kept on and the students who were willing to act around the issues that concerned them could be intimidated. But it didn't work at Harvard. The ties between students in and around the building and other students on campus were much greater than the Administration estimated. And the degree to which students cared about ROTC and the war, and could be brought to care about such issues as Harvard expansion, was severely underrated.

The War in Vietnam

A couple of years ago, when people were just coming to oppose the war, the issues surrounding the war in Vietnam were daily topics of discussion. Lately, however, very few people talk about it. Opposition to the war is taken for granted. Perhaps there is nothing more to say about it.

In fact, however, there is still a lot to talk about. This has come out very clearly in discussions about ROTC at Harvard. Many of those who have argued that ROTC should stay at Harvard have said that the war in Vietnam, or American foreign policy in general, just isn't bad enough to justify an attempt to weaken our military effort, or to compromise the civil liberties of those who would wish to join ROTC. Many feel that the U.S. should leave Vietnam, but should do so mainly because there is no future there, not because the U.S. should leave. Certainly, many cringe when they hear radicals say that they want the NLF to win in Vietnam. Furthermore, there is still a whole lot of confusion about what has happened and is happening in Vietnam. There is lots to talk about, and many arguments to be had about the war in Vietnam.

To start back at the beginning, the U.S. has been interested in Vietnam for a long time. Truman backed the French in their war in Vietnam from 1948 on, and by 1954 was paying 80% of the expenses of the war. When the French, their position in Vietnam seriously eroding, considered withdrawing from Vietnam in 1954, high-ups in the American government, military, and corporate world seriously debated the possibility of direct intervention by the United States at that time. Even the use of nuclear weapons was discussed. However, there were splits among those with power

as to the efficacy of such tactics, and Eisenhower decided not to intervene militarily.

However, the U.S. ended up getting at least part of what it wanted in another way. At the Geneva Conference in 1954, a compromise was worked out among the "great powers" -- England, France, the U.S., Russia, and China -- at the expense of the Viet Minh which gave up considerable territory which they controlled in return for the promise of free elections within two years which everyone anticipated would unify the country under communist leadership.

One of the leaders of the National Liberation Front, Nguyen Huu Tho, looking back on Geneva, explained the commonly held position at the time,

> There were mixed feelings about the two years' delay over reunification, but the general sentiment was that this was a small price to pay for the return to peace and a normal life free from foreign rule.

In fact, the price would have to be far greater. The U.S., with the cooperation of the French who were responsible for administering the southern half of Vietnam until the reunification elections,set about creating an "independent" anti-communist state in that part of Vietnam. A satisfactory puppet was found in the name of Ngo Dinh Diem - who despite being part of the native Vietnamese elite had been abroad for a number of years and therefore had not obviously compromised himself by collaborating with the French against the anti-imperialist resistance movement of the Vietminh; Diem could easily be billed by U.S. propaganda as a "nationalist alternative." The U.S. convinced the French to set up Diem as Prime Minister,

and he quickly went about the task of carving out a politcal base for himself with U.S. help.

Now the U.S. and Diem well understood the dilemmas that confronted them. According to the Geneva Agreements, elections were to take place by November, 1956. But the popularity of the Vietminh was well understood. An extremely anti-communist columnist Joseph Alsop said upon visiting Vietnam at the time:

> It was difficult for me...to conceive of a Communist government genuinely "serving the people." I could hardly imagine a communist government that was also a popular government and almost a democratic government...The Vietminh could not possibly have carried on the resistance for one year, let alone nine years, without the people's strong united support. Relying almost entirely on their own resources, these Southern Vietnamese peasants had tremendous success.

The conclusions were clear. As early as March, 1955, the New York Times wrote:

> What exists in Vietnam is a barren dictatorship... Ngo Dinh Diem doesn't dare install political freedom...General Collins...the real boss here, has been given the job of sweeping out an Augean stable with a swish-broom... Government must be extended to the villages where all too often...Communism obtains... And the time is short. Geneva fixed July, 1956 as the date for all Vietnam elections. These really will never be held...the non-communist South cannot afford the slightest risk of defeat.

> Nobody likes to talk about this. But when the time to admit it arrives a grave crisis must inevitably develop.

The remarkable thing was that a "grave crisis" didn't develop right away. The Vietminh in the North chose to focus on building up their society in the North of Vietnam rather than renewing fighting. Those who had fought against the French in the South were left behind to handle Diem by themselves.

Diem, meanwhile, together with his U.S. allies who financed his expenses and trained his Army, went realistically about the task of establishing his political rule. From the middle of 1955 on, Diem carried out a severe repression in the countryside. His "Anti-Communist Denunciation Campaign" was intended to seek out, intimidate, and kill the Vietminh sympathizers and organizers that had opposed French colonial rule. By 1956, approximately 50,000 people were in jails, "re-education centers," and concentration camps. Even a glimmer of this appeared in the American press, as in a Life article in 1957 that commented that although Diem was a real democratic alternative to Communism,

> Behind the facade of photography, flags and slogans there is a grim structure of decrees, political prisons, concentration camps, milder "re-education centers, and secret police.

This repression was not carried out with pure malice, but out of necessity. In much of South Vietnam the Vietminh had carried out thorough land reform. The big landlords had fled or were driven out and hundreds of thousands of peasant families had taken possession of the land they worked. For the first time in their

lives, the peasants didn't have to pay up to 2/3 of their crop as rent to a landlord. For the first time they, not the landlords and various foreigners they had served at different times, decided what happened on the village level. The strength of the Vietminh political organization depended on this land reform because of the importance of the land reform to the peasantry and because of the destruction of the local power of the landlords. Thus, it was necessary to reverse the land reform together with carrying out the political repression in order to destroy the Vietminh. Furthermore, Diem's main base in Vietnam consisted of landlords who demanded that their land be returned to them.

In response to the political repression, the imposition of landlord rule, and the reversal of land reform, the old Vietminh cadres that remained, together with other peasants, began to fight back. By 1959, the fight had taken on some proportions. French historian Devillers puts it this way:

> It was in such a climate of feeling that, in 1959, responsible elements of the Communist resistance in Indochina came to the conclusion that they had to act, whether Hanoi wanted them to or not. They could no longer continue to stand by while their supporters were arrested, thrown into prison, and tortured, without attempting to do anything about it as an organization, without giving some lead to the people in the struggle in which it was to be involved. Hanoi preferred diplomatic notes, but it was to find that its hand had been forced.

In this early period of the struggle by the NLF that has continued until today, emphasis was placed on

organization and agitation. According to Douglas Pike, an ex U.S.-security expert in Saigon, in his book The Vietcong, the purpose of the NLF in this period was "to loosen the government's administrative hold on the village, which was often weak even without NLF pressure on it." Acts of violence were highly selective, and directed at this end. Pike says,

> ...the killing of individuals was done with great specificity, as, for example, pinning a note to the shirtfront of an assassinated government official, explaining the crimes he had committed. (In fact) the NLF theoreticians considered the terror to be the weapon of the weak, the desperate, or the ineffectual guerrilla leader.

The fact that these village leaders, appointed by Diem, had presided over the hated mass denunciation programs and "land reform" made these acts of terror popular with the peasants and important as a part of the growing NLF organization when taken together with the educational work that NLF organizers carried out.

Though the military efforts of the NLF have been important, and though the military capability of t he NLF has grown consistently throughout its history to the point where it is now, during its "spring offensive", capable of pinning U.S. troops to coastal bases while inflicting massive damage on these bases, barracks, and supply dpots, the military achievements of the NLF have never been primary, and have furthermore depended on prior political achievements. As Pike points out, the NLF's objective is

> not the killing of ARVN soldiers, not the

> occupation of real estate, not the preparation for some great pitched battle...but organization in depth of the rural population...to restructure the social order of the village and train the villagers to control themselves.

What happens in the villages? In each village, liberation associations are set up to deal with the special needs of particular groupings within the village.

> For the farmer, for example, the Farmers' Liberation Association meant land reform; for the village women, the Women's Liberation Association meant status and more equal rights with men. Thus the individual villager saw in the liberation association...an opportunity for benefits that had not previously existed and so he voluntarily supported it.

Health and education facilities were set up in rural Vietnam for the first time. Never before had Vietnamese children in the countryside had a chance to go to school. Never before had villagers had access to public health facilities -- organized under the NLF in a decentralized form with clinics in each village -- that could eliminate the epidemics that had previously been part of the tragedy of the peasant's existence.

The Vietnamese peasants relate to the NLF with varying degrees of commitment. Most or all participate in the Liberation Associations. Some, however, are politcal cadre for the NLF. They organize within the village and work with NLF organizers attached to the regional and regular armies who take broader responsibilities. The local villagers grow food for the NLF, volunteer

under considerable social pressure to fight with the NLF, and perform intelligence on enemy operations. They look to the local, regional, and regular cadres for interpretations of what has been happening, for protection, and for organization of social, educational, medical, and political institutions that have so changed their lives. According to Pike,

> almost all Vietnamese...were of the firm opinion that as the result of Vietminh and then NLF activity, particularly in the areas long under their control, deep, significant, and fundamental change had occurred in the social order...the liberated area was characterized by a greater sense of equalitarianism, greater social mobility with individual merit countin for more and family for less, and a greater awareness of strata, class consciousness, and social solidarity.

Hand in hand with the growing organization and strength of the NLF has gone the progressive decline of the South Vietnamese government. In 1963, Diem had so isolated himself and had so been unable with U.S. help and advice to stop the growing insurgency that the U.S. cooperated in his overthrow by military coup d'etat in November. But things got no better. The South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) was increasingly incapable of fighting the NLF, as the morale of the draftees declined and desertion increased. According to an AP dispatch of April 30, 1966, the Saigon army of 600,000 had lost 180,000 to desertion in 1965. This process began long before 1965. Before his assassination, John F. Kennedy saw the need to introduce directly U.S. troops into Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson only continued the troop escalation, the total reaching 550,000 by 1968.

Meanwhile, heavy bombing of the North was begun in February, 1965. Few targets were spared, as many visitors (e.g. Harrison Salisbury) will confirm. The purpose of these bombing raids were allegedly the stopping of supplies from the North. However, there are reasons to suspect such an explanation when one considers that (according to Sen. Mansfield's estimates) there were only 400 North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam at the time the bombing began. Nor were supplies from the North especially important. The State Department's White Paper, "Aggression from the North", written in 1964, could find little evidence for significant quantities of supplies from the North. Indeed, North Vietnam has provided serious aid to the NLF only after the beginning of the bombing. Probably the real reasons for the decision to start bombing the North were a desire to build the morale of the sagging Saigon regime by demonstrating in a decisive way the degree of American commitment and to attempt to blackmail North Vietnam into using whatever control it had over the NLF to press for a settlement by the NLF on terms favorable to the U.S. As far as one can tell, the bombing ultimately failed in all of its objectives.

W. W. Rostow, one of the architects of our Vietnam policy who fashions himself as capitalism's answer to Mao Tse-Tung, put forth the liberal line on wars of national liberation before the graduating class of the U.S. Army school in special warfare in 1961:

> We can learn to prevent the emergence of the famous sea in which Mao Tse Tung taught his men to swim. This requires, of course, not merely a proper military program of deterrence but programs of village development, communications, and indoctrination.

When Rostow talks about preventing the emergence of the "sea" he means trying to develop a strategy "to win the hearts and minds of the people" and thereby prevent them from supporting communist guerillas.

But what happens when "programs of village development" turn out to be programs of increased privilege for large landlords. What happens when our strategic hamlet programs and our search and destroy operations flounder precisely because the fish and the water - the guerilla and the people - are one. In that case the U.S. has only two choices. The first is to get out - clearly an unacceptable one for powerful interests who feel the decline of the anti-war movement at home gives them the option of another try at "winning." The second is what we have chosen: aerial saturation bombing. The theory behind it isn't very hard to understand. It attempts to say to the Vietnamese people, "O.K., goddamn it, you've convinced us you support the V.C. But we're going to make you pay for that support. We're going to make it so rough on you that you'll come to accept the fact that you can't win." The result is the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled from U.S. planes.

But the amazing thing is that it's the Americans who can't win. It's the mighty U.S. Air Force that now finds itself locked into protecting the "enclaves" that President Johnson violently opposed, but the NLF support in the countryside made necessary.

The outcome of the war in Vietnam is still in question. What we do at home is not the central criterion that will determine U.S. policy, but it certainly can have some effect precisely because the American political and military situation in Vietnam is so weak. The Thieu-Ky government is weak and isolated. Even the

U.S. sponsored elections in which communists and neutralists were not allowed to participated has produced problems. The government's distrust of pro-NLF forces developing inside Vietnam has produced the arrest of 51 junior officers for "threatening the national security in time of war" (according to the February 8 Saigon Daily News) and led to assassinations and arrests of prominent politicians, intellectuals, and religious leaders who one year ago could safely be counted in the Saigon camp.

The NLF, despite its impressive political and military efforts, cannot be assured that it will win. Despite its successes, the Front is in a very difficult situation. In an effort to build the broadest possible alliance against the United States intervention it is possible that a wealth native elite will ally itself with the revolution - opposed to the profits of foreign corporations but also opposed to the building of socialism in south Vietnam. It is again possible that the international situation may make Vietnam a pawn in a larger power struggle. The Vietnamese are walking a tight rope - so far they have done very well. It is important to build a movement in this country that can break through the illusion that the negotiations are working out a just settlement for the Vietnamese and that can raise the domestic costs for the government's presence in Vietnam as high as possible.

VIETNAM and U. S. IMPERIALISM

We must try to explain why the United States government has been fighting in Vietnam for a number of years in an effort to preserve the rule of a corrupt clique of bureaucrats, generals, and landlords against the challenge of a popular and necessary social revolution. We have been told all our lives by our schools, media, and politicians that the purpose of US foreign policy is the promotion of freedom and democracy. One might be inclined, then, to think that Vietnam is somehow an accident, an exception to the rule.

However, we also have more to go on than just Vietnam. We also know that the US government's "free world" allies have included a number of other regimes no less reactionary than the Vietnamese dictatorship. Salazar's Portugal, Franco's Spain, Trujillo's Dominican Republic, Batista's Cuba, Chiang Kai-shek's China, Duvalier's Haiti, the military juntas of Brazil, Greece, Indonesia, South Korea, and Thailand, and the racist regimes of southern Africa--these are only the better known and the most vicious of such dictatorships. The US position--considered in this context--is not quite so surprising.

What is it, then, about these rotten regimes that our government finds so attractive?

The answer to this question is that while such governments obviously have nothing to offer in the way of freedom and democracy in the manner that those terms are commonly understood, they do in fact provide one special kind of freedom, a freedom which our government cherishes greatly. This is the freedom they provide for businessmen, and especially United States businessmen, to make large profits. That is, while most of us would choose to judge a society according to the way in which it serves the people affected by it, the US government chooses to judge societies according to the way they serve American business.

According to this view, the defining feature of the area known as the "free world" is hospitality to US capital. A better name for the free world would be the American Empire: US economic, political, and military power is dominant within the free world, as are American economic interests. The United States, through its government and international corporations, dominates the politican economies within its Empire for the purpose of extending the economic interests of American business. US policy is most appropriately labelled imperialism.

* * * * *

What is the evidence for such a view?

We should begin by looking at the magnitude, and nature, of US economic interests in the underdeveloped world.

US business began to take a serious interest in the underdeveloped world in the 1890s. The depression of 1893 was the most severe in American history up to that time, and the third economic crisis in twenty years. Not only did such crises hurt profits, but they also threatened social stability. The '90s were the scene of bloody strikes, angry marches of the unemployed, and the growth of radical political challenges to the American system. Businessmen, looking for ways out of such crises, began to see the importance of foreign markets as a way to stimulate the economy. Some of the problems that producers were having in marketing their goods at home could thereby be solved. Interest focused on the markets of Latin America and China. The Monroe Doctrine for Latin America was restated--American interests would be dominant in the hemisphere. The Open Door Notes for China were issued--China would remain open to foreign trade and capital, and the US (having newly arrived on the scene) should share equal rights of access with all other imperial powers. American determination to aggressively expand commercially was made absolutely clear from 1898 to 1903, in the wars to eliminate Spanish rule and to put down the revolu-

tionary patriots in Cuba and the Philippines.

Since that time, US interests have expanded tremendously. Preoccupation with foreign trade continued: as Franklyn Roosevelt said in 1935 in the midst of the Great Depression,

> "Foreign markets must be regained if America's producers are to rebuild a full and enduring domestic economy for our people. There is no other way if we would avoid painful economic dislocations and unemployment."

In addition, in the postwar years, US foreign investments leaped ahead prodigously. The U.S. News and World Report commented in 1964:

> "Big US firms find the pickings very good in their foreign operations. American executives are realizing, as never before, what the potentials in foreign lands are. Big growth in sales is to be abroad; not in the U.S. This is one of the most important business facts of the second half of the twentieth century."

Specifically: in 1950, 10% of the profits of US corporations (excluding banks) were earned off foreign operations. In 1964, this proportion had risen to 22%. Over this period, while domestic profits for those corporations increased by 66%, profits off foreign operations increased 271%. Though somewhat less than half of all US investments and trade is in the underdeveloped world (the rest are in the industrialized capitalist countries--Europe, Japan), considerably more than half of US profits are derived from interests in the underdeveloped world, because of the higher rate of profit there.

All of this begins to indicate the rapidly growing stake of American business in foreign operations and to explain the nature of its dependence on such operations. But global figures on profits give us only a first approximation. We should also note that the

figures given on profits are an average over corporations that have a stake abroad and corporations that don't. If we look at the particular industries and companies that have foreign operations, we find that the dependence of these is far greater than that indicated by the average. Furthermore, we should also remember that even a company that depends on the underdeveloped world for only 2-3% of its profits will be interested in fighting to keep those profits.

Moreover, profits don't tell the whole story. Some corporations have entered foreign markets which, if not tremendously profitable, still give the corporation a foothold for dominating markets that can be developed in the future or for outcompeting other local or international firms for existing markets. Other corporations in industries requiring particular raw materials for production (e.g., oil, copper) gain concessions to extract those materials in order to gain access to a long-term supply and to prevent competitors from having such access. The largest US oil companies, for example, depend on a monopoly of two thirds of the world's crude oil reserves for their world preeminence in the refining and selling of oil. The importance of access to raw materials is brought home all the more sharply by considering that an increasing number of industries now depend on foreign supplies of raw materials and that many of these industries are key to the US military establishment.

The companies with the largest foreign holdings are also the companies which dominate our economy here at home. The eight corporations that together gain 25% of all corporate profits in the United States (General Motors, Ford, AT&T, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Texaco, Gulf, Dupont, IBM) are all heavily committed overseas. This has important implications for the posture of the entire corporate community toward foreign expansion and the need for an aggressive foreign policy to protect economic interests. In particular, these giant corporations have allies throughout the US economy--suppliers, customers, firms under the

same ownership or top-level financial control. Furthermore, there is the overlapping set of interests that directly or indirectly are dependent on military contracts, which are responsible for 15-20% of our entire national product. The military contractors have a clear and obvious interest in an aggressive foreign policy. Taken together, these interests constitute a solid block of the very largest American corporations, deeply committed to preserving and extending the American Empire.

A leading businessman, Henry F. Grady, has said:

> "The capitalist system is essentially an international system. If it cannot function internationally, it will break down completely."

Whether or not the very survival of American capitalism does depend on its economic stake in the underdeveloped countries, there is no question but that a tremendously powerful group of corporate concerns have a great deal at stake in the American Empire. These corporations exercise decisive influence on the policies of the American government. They do so through a whole set of mechanisms that include their importance to the economy, massive campaign contributions sufficient to control both political parties, extensive lobbying, ties to commercially-owned media, and direct representation in the Federal government. As President Woodrow Wilson pointed out in a moment of candor over fifty years ago:

> "Suppose you go to Washington and try to get at your Government. You will always find that while you are politely listened ot, the men really consulted are the men who have the big stake--the big bankers, the big manufacturers, and the big masters of commerce...The masters of the Government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States."

The fact of corporate influence in the government, together with the large corporate interest in an aggressive foreign policy to maintain and expand the American Empire (imperialism), leads to some clear conclusions. On the one hand, the US government opposes socialist revolution all over the world, as it is an attempt to achieve independence from imperial domination. Such an attempt threatens present and future economic interests in the country in question. Furthermore, a successful socialist revolution would undermine the confidence of US investors in other places, while encouraging revolutionaries and oppressed people around the world to fight for liberation against a colossus that has proven vulnerable These are the bases for US opposition to socialist revolution in Vietnam. While direct interests in Vietnam are limited (though growing), it offers some considerable opportunities for the future. More importantly, Vietnam is seen as critical to the remainder of the US Empire, and particularly, to Southeast Asia. Henry Cabot Lodge, former Ambassador to South Vietnam and chief negotiator for the United States in Paris, puts it this way:

> "He who holds or has influence in Vietnam can affect the future of the Philippines and Formosa to the east, Thailand and Burma with their huge rice surpluses to the west, and Malaysia and Indonesia with their rubber, ore and tin to the south. Vietnam thus does not exist in a geographical vacuum--from it large storehouses of wealth and population can be influenced and undermined."

The Vice-President of Chase Manhattan Bank in charge of Far Eastern operations chimes in with his concern:

> "In the past, foreign investors have been somewhat wary of the over-all political prospect for the region. I must say, though, that the U.S. actions in Vietnam this year--which have demonstrated that the U.S. will continue to give effective protection to the free nations

of the region--have considerably reassured both Asian and Western investors. In fact, I see some reason for hope that the same sort of economic growth may take place in the free economies of Asia that took place in Europe after the Truman Doctrine and after NATO provided a protective shield. The same thing also took place in Japan after the U.S. intervention in Korea removed investor doubts."

* * * * *

In addition to staunchly opposing social revolution around the world, the U.S. government serves American business on a day-by-day basis. The history of our relations with the underdeveloped countries is defined by a continual struggle on the part of the United States to extend and maintain the rights and privileges of American capital. Within the underdeveloped countries, wherever US presence is at all significant, policy toward American interests is a major issue of public debate. The US government uses its power to make sure that the issues are resolved in favor on US companies.

Let's look, for example, at the case of Guatemala.

For a period of time in the late '40s and early '50s in that country, a liberal government was in power that took certain mild measures to improve welfare and to reform the economy. Inevitably, these policies came into conflict with the interests of US companies and especially those of the giant United Fruit Company, banana producer and owner of a large railway subsidiary. The Guatemalan government encouraged the growth of trade unions, and it reversed earlier legislation outlawing strikes. In particular, a strong railway union developed. The legal minimum wage was raised from 26¢ a day to $1.08 a day, though enforcement of this measure was usually ineffective. Petroleum laws were amended to require refining of oil on Guatemalan soil (rather than the direct export of crude oil to be refined elsewhere) and 51% Guatemalan ownership of

all oil companies. A tax was levied against profits interest, and dividends of investors living outside of the country. To cap it off; a limited land reform measure was enacted in 1953. Under it, 234,000 acres of uncultivated land belonging to the United Fruit Company were expropriated, to be paid for in 25 year bonds according to the value set on the property for tax purposes by United Fruit itself. This was considered unacceptable. The company wanted this land for further expansion, and to make sure that no competitor set up shop in the country. Further, as United Fruit saw it, underassessment of property for purposes of tax evasion didn't mean that the property should be undervalued for the purposes of compensation.

By the end of 1954, the reform regime in Guatemala was out on its heel, the victim of a military takeover organized by the CIA. Shrouded in secrecy at the time, the US role in sponsoring an invasion force from Honduras, organizing the military junta to succeed in office, and bombing Guatemala City was later admitted by Eisenhower and others. The new government immediately revealed what the coup was about. Literacy was imposed as a condition for voting, thereby disfranchising 70% of the people. Strikes were outlawed, and the railway union broke. The only unions that were permitted to exist were those deemed acceptable by the dictatorship. An estimated 72,000 people were arrested without trial in the first four months of the new regime. All expropriated lands were returned, and the 100,000 peasants who had received land were thereby dispossessed. The minimum wage returned to 26¢. Restrictions on oil companies were removed, and numerous contracts with US petroleum companies were signed. Profits were allowed to leave the country freely. And in 1955, as if in payment for services rendered, the man who engineered the coup for the CIA--General Walter Bedell Smith--became a Director of the United Fruit Company.

The case of Guatemala suggests by what methods differences between US interests and the government of a client country may be resolved. However, the United

States is usually able to repel attacks on American interests in way other than overturning governments.

One of the chief ways in which the American government and corporations operate is through local allies. Strong efforts are made to develop local business, landowning, and military elites that can be organized to fight for US economic interests. Local capital is often threatened by the same policies as is US capital (e.g., tax reform, labor laws), and therefore can be mobilized to support US interests. In addition--and very important--local capital is normally bound to American capital in a whole set of ways that leave it dependent on the American corporations. Investors in manufacturing, for example, often use American brand names, patents, parts, and technologies. In addition, they may share ownership with US capital. Investors in raw materials usually sell to huge US commercial concerns. In general, the largest business interests share much in common with American interests and are sufficiently dependent to support them in all cases. As for the military, its loyalty to the United States is cultivated by lucrative aid, training programs, and advisory help.

Also important as a means of everyday control, in addition to the loyalty of local elites, are the American economic aid programs. These programs are very revealing about the purposes of American foreign policy as well.

We are accustomed, in this country, to thinking of US aid as a generous gift. If we are of a liberal persuasion, we have probably criticized our government for being stingy with aid. But in fact, aid serves American economic interests quite well. On the one hand, because client governments desperately need it, it provides a club by which to keep such governments in line. On the other hand, it provides an excellent means by which the interests of American corporations abroad can be extended.

Most governments in the underdeveloped world desper-

ately need aid. Highly vulnerable to threats of insurgency from the masses of people who get nothing from the system but hunger and starvation, they need money for arms on the one hand and for government services on the other. In most underdeveloped countries, taxation mainly rests on the export and import of goods. But as raw material prices decline on the world market relative to the prices of manufactured goods, as they have for most products for the last 15 years, the revenue from foreign trade for a country that mainly exports raw materials (most underdeveloped countries) does not keep pace with the needs of the government. This is one basis for the need for foreign aid. In addition, the decline of export earnings limits the capacity of the country to import goods. Foreign aid can also provide foreign exchange to permit further imports.

It may come as a shock to us that most aid is advanced in the form of loans, not grants. This means that the debtor government must pay the "aid" back, together with the interest on it. Thus, taking loans to support further government spending or to provide more foreign currency only serves to perpetuate the dependency. Soon, the client government must allocate part of its tight budget and foreign exchange requirements to paying back the loans in dollars, Some governments are in the position of having to allocate up to a third of their yearly budgets for the repayment of past loans. The result is simply to create the demand for still further loans.

Once in such a cycle of dependence, a client government is in a position of extreme subservience to US interests. For the American government can exact many concessions in return for extending credit. As Eugene Black, former Chairman and President of the US controlled World Bank has said:

> "...our foreign aid programs constitute a distinct benefit to American business. The three major benefits are: (1) Foreign aid provides a substantial and immediate market for U.S.

goods and services. (2) Foreign aid stimulates the development of new overseas markets for U.S. companies. (3) Foreign aid orients national economies toward a free enterprise system in which U.S. firms can prosper."

More than 85% of US aid comes back to the United States for the purchase of US goods. Most aid programs contain restrictions by which aid money must be used to "buy American." This is the case whether or not a particular item is more expensive in the United States than it is in some other country. In all, 11% of U.S. exports directly result from such foreign "aid."

Another condition of the extension of credit by the United States is the use of aid monies to directly benefit American foreign investors, many times at the expense of local competitors. For example, aid money is used to make investment surveys for United States firms; to provide foreign exchange to enable these companies to import parts and supplies from the United States; to provide loans to help them make investments in plant and machinery; and to build roads and ports that directly serve American commercial interests.

Further, extension of aid is used as a political bargaining point to resolve many of the issues of dispute between client governments and American interests. Many of these governments are brought to sponsor policies that favor U.S. interests as the price of getting continued aid. Concessions of mineral rights for US companies; tax exemptions; anti-labor, anti-union, and anti-strike policies; freedom to repatriate profits to the United States without restriction; loans by the client government to US firms; tariff policies that favor United States imports; import policies by which American companies get first claim on scarce foreign exchange to import goods--these are only some of the policies, favors, and subsidies that US companies are usually capable of winning from client governments. Aid plays an important part in the process of influence.

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Arnold Toynbee has said:

> "America is today the leader of the world-side anti-revolutionary movement in defense of vested interests. She now stands for what Rome stood for. Rome consistently supported the rich against the poor in all foreign communities that fell under her sway; and since the poor, so far, have always and everywhere been far more numerous than the rich, Rome's policy made for inequality, injustice, and the least happiness of the greatest number."

It is in supporting the rich against the poor, and in opposing socialist revolution by which the poor seek a place on the face of the earth, that US imperialism has committed its greatest crime. The war in Vietnam should be opposed not only because the US is fighting to destroy a popular movement, but also because it is fighting to destroy a movement that promises real solutions to the problems that the Vietnamese people have faced for the last century.

Under the present system in the underdeveloped world, a few large landowners control most of the land. The majority must work or rent someone else's land. Many starve; most suffer from nutritional disease; life expectancies are under 30 years in many places; death rates at birth reach greater than 50%. Food consumption, already ridiculously inadequate, has actually declined in many areas over the last three decades, according to UN statistics.

In the cities, the situation is almost as bad. Unemployment is tremendous and quickly growing in many countries. Masses of the unemployed live in rotting shanty towns, making their "living" (if they can) through scavenging, begging, prostituion, peddling, and occasional work. The postwar years have seen a phenomenal growth of these huge slums.

It would be a mistake to think that these problems were unsolvable, inherent in the poverty of the country or in the steady increase of population. Rather, the failure of these countries to develop and to provide a decent living for all of their people have clear causes and clear solutions, as the success of socialist development has demonstrated.

The prime imperative of the underdeveloped country is land reform and social control over the resources of the society. The strangulation of the people by the large landlord and businessman must be ended. At present, these classes control the distribution of wealth for the majority of the people, and they keep most for themselves while letting those dependent on them live at starvation level. The large landowners decide whether land is to be used for the production of export crops, food crops, or nothing at all. The fact that food production is going down in many countries, and that the people desperately need land, does not prevent these landowners from holding large amounts of land fallow and from converting land from production of food to production of export crops as considerations of profitability demand. Furthermore, these landowners together with the big businessmen control the substantial portion of the wealth in the society. The priorities of human need and development of their countries would lead to using these resources to produce the goods that are most needed, to provide health, education, and housing, and to lay a basis for industrialization by building up heavy industry and by investing in the agricultural sector. Instead, those dominant classes that control the wealth in today's underdeveloped world choose to waste their wealth on lavish living, speculation in land, usurious loans to poor peasants, safe investments in New York and Swiss banks, and military spending. In the few countries where significant investment in industry has occurred, it has been for the purpose of providing luxury goods, it has depended on US companies for know-how and parts, and it has been organized monopolistically so as to reduce the incentive for innovation and efficiency.

A socialist revolution is needed to take the power over society's wealth out of the hands of the dominant classes and to place it in the hands of the total community. The community can then decide how to distribute goods and what kinds of investments should be made. In general, it can take over the many important decisions now monopolized by the large landowners and businessmen. The practical results of socialist revolution have been remarkable, though variable, in most of today's socialist countries. The Soviet Union, the first socialist country, developed from a backward country in 1917 to be the world's second industrial power in the space of fifty years. However, it did this at the cost of great suffering (albeit abetted by the hostility of the West--intervention, invasion, economic quarantine) and in the process reenacted certain class privileges. China and Cuba are better examples of socialist countries that have avoided the worst aspects of the Soviet experience. These countries saw early the need to avoid entrenched bureaucracy, to develop local institutions within which the people could participate and exercise power, to mobilize the entire people, and to emphasize the development and consciousness of their citizens. All of the socialist countries have spent large proportions of their resources on health and education. Increased food production through cooperative methods of farming and cultivation of new crops and land together with equal sharing of basic necessities has meant the end to starvation and nutritional disease.

Socialist revolution has come into direct conflict with the United States. The desire of the community to control its own resources on behalf of the entire people has meant kicking out US economic interests. The desire of the country for independence has led to repudiation of debt and emphasis on self-reliance in the mobilization of resources rather than reliance on foreign "aid." The posture of the United States, in turn, toward socialist revolution has made it the

most reactionary force in the world today.

As the above analysis has tried to suggest, the American government has chosen to play this role out of a desire to maintain and expand an economic empire that is extremely profitable to American business. The implications of such a view are clear: that to effectively oppose our foreign policy, both in its visible aspect as in Vietnam and its day-by-day aspect as in the functioning of its aid program, we must attack directly and powerfully the corporate interests and priorities that run our society. To do that, a majority movement of Americans must be built, embodying the goal of ending imperialism, and the understanding that such a goal can only be achieved via a socialist transformation of our own society. Our problems abroad lie at home.

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